

# HOW-TO GUIDE:

## DEVELOPING A GROWTH MINDSET USING REBOOT

Carol Dweck's extensive research around mindsets, has firmly established the benefits of students attaining a growth mindset. Those of us who have a growth mindset believe that we can improve intelligence, ability and performance with the right practice and effort. The opposite, a fixed mindset, refers to the belief that our talents and skills are innate and not able to be developed. Fortunately, research indicates that our mindsets can be altered from fixed to growth.

### The advantages of a growth mindset include students:

- More persistent in their learning and more included to seek feedback
- More motivated and able to self-regulate
- Improvements in stress levels and general wellbeing
- Improved learning orientation and a reduction in the sense of helplessness and giving up

While 98% of educators think developing a growth mindset in their students is important, only 20% feel confident that they have the tools to do so (Inner Drive, 2017). Reboot empowers young people to understand where they are at in their learning, when they need to ask for help and assistance and provides a clear problem-solving framework to support a step by step approach to learning and improvement.

### Reboot strategies that help foster a Growth Mindset include:

- Quadrants of Engagement
- Busting the "I am dumb" myth (neuroscience of the brain as a muscle)
- Using the Positive Change Highway as a feedback and praise tool
- Positive Change Highway (developing identity goals and small actions, problem solving ability)
- Self-regulation (5 Faces, check-in, breathing, reframing, refocusing and self-talk)
- Student self-reflection (Positive Change Highway)
- Wall of Awesome

Reboot provides the visuals and language to establish peer norms in the classroom of learning tenacity and 'giving it a go' with problem solving. It also provides a framework to aid meta-cognition and generate useful self-talk.

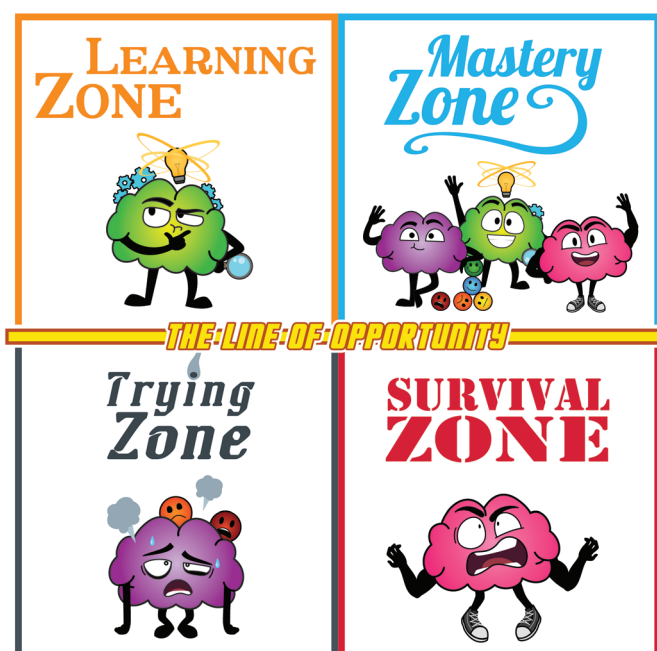
### Note:

Sometimes a fixed mindset is super: it's healthy to think that you can't manage a 30 meter drop without some form of support. And it is never as simple as a pure growth or fixed mindset: it's more a continuum

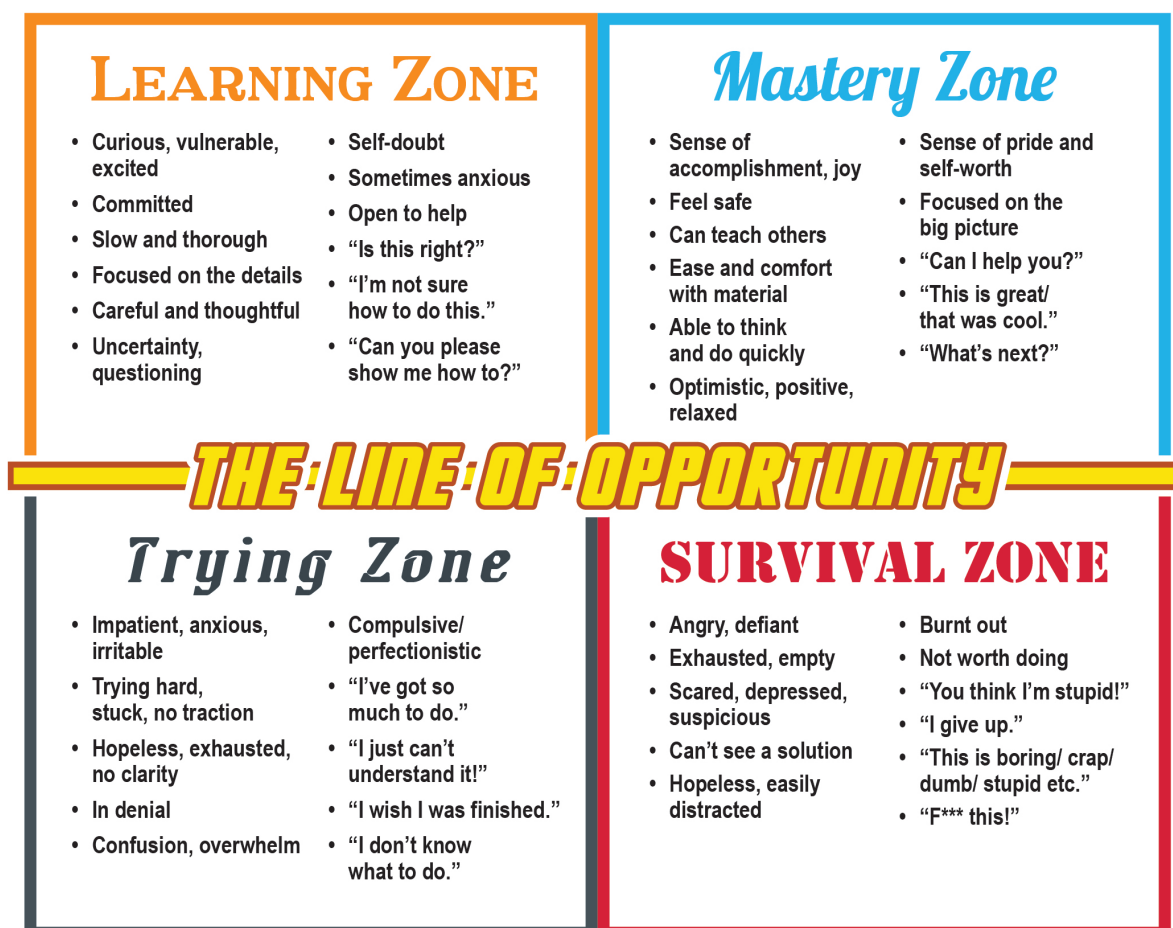
# Quadrants of Engagement

Regular reference to the Quadrants in class and use of them by students helps build greater self-awareness and ability to manage the discomfort of learning challenges. The Quadrants can be used as an engagement check-in tool at any point in a class or at the end as a debrief/summary. To enhance student's self-awareness as learners:

1. Establish a clear working understanding of the Quadrants. Use Quadrant language in everyday classes such as "We are now entering the Learning Zone and by definition if you are learning you might feel a little nervous or anxious or excited. Many of us will try to avoid any uncertainty or doubt by wanting to leave the room (i.e. go to the toilet) or by chatting to our next door neighbour. Let's see if we can train our brains to stay on task even when we are feeling a little uncomfortable." Or "If you feel you are moving into the Survival Zone just let me know, 'cause I am here to help you get back up above the Line of Opportunity." And "Remember after the initial excitement and ease there will be a dip in our learning. Be prepared and double up on the focus rather than dropping down in Trying."



2. Create a visual cue of the Quadrants that students can easily refer to (this may be in student diaries.) Have the key questions, feelings and words available for them to reference as below.



# CAN YOU CROSS THE LINE OF OPPORTUNITY?

## LEARNING:

You are committed, moving forward slowly, open to help, sometimes doubtful of your ability, careful and need help to understand details and see the bigger picture. Are you committed to focusing on this? Can you see the way forward even if it seems a little hard right now?

## MASTERY:

Feel comfortable and a sense of accomplishment, feels safe and fun to be doing, you are able to do and think quickly about a subject or skill. You might be able to help others too. Does it feel like you could teach this later on this evening to someone at home? Does it feel like you could apply this in a part-time job later this week?



## TRYING:

Feeling impatient and anxious and really uncertain, want to move forward but it feels like you are stuck and can't do it on your own. You might feel like you have so much to do that you don't know where to start, or anxious that you aren't going to get it perfect. Does it feel really stressful and overwhelming, maybe not clear? Do you want to do really well so badly that you are feeling panicked?

## SURVIVAL:

You might feel it's dumb and not worth doing, makes you frustrated and angry or feel really sad. No point giving it a go at all 'cause it is dumb or you don't think you can do it. Does it feel pointless and not worth it, like you couldn't be bothered? Do you hate using these Quadrants?

- (Optional to create greater ownership.) Ask students how they feel when they are in Survival or Trying and what has put them there in the past. What have they used to successfully get back over the Line of Opportunity?
- Ask students which Quadrant they are in with reference to a task, class or learning process. Where are you at right now? Is there something stopping you from getting across the Line of Opportunity? What internal and external blockers are getting in the road? See the below table.

Reading and writing problems	Can't ask questions	Problems making or keeping friends	Not attending class
Missed classes	Things happening outside school	Sleep/hunger	Too much anxiety or feeling overwhelmed
Study problems	Money problems	Family breakdown	Teacher doesn't help me
Can't understand the teacher	Transport or housing problems (like couch surfing)	Drug or alcohol use	My family don't help
Health and/or mental health problems	Problems with friends (bullying or fights etc.)	Can't concentrate	Task level (too easy or difficult)
Self-perception (esteem)	Disheartened	Unmet emotional needs	Schooling history
Fixed mindset: "I am dumb" "I can't change"	No goals or positive intention	Family/peer expectations and undermining	My friends or family wouldn't like it if I tried
Don't care	Sense of isolation	Learnt helplessness	It won't work for me
Fear/resistance	Unhealthy mental habits	Cultural/gender identity	Don't like the teacher or other students in the class

- Is there anything that you could do, or I could help you with to get you across the Line of Opportunity? Think about the right effort, right strategies, seeking feedback or taking some time to reflect.
- Repeated as a debrief at the end of each class or week, the Quadrants become an easily applied framework to build student understanding of how successful they have been in their learning and how engaged they were in the class. The Quadrants also provide a common language to facilitate easy discussion between students and teachers about student progress, the strategies that they might employ to become more self-sufficient and successful as learners and the support that might be needed.

## Quadrants to encourage learning tenacity and a Growth Mindset

Learning tenacity helps us move from Learning into Mastery. If every time we fall over we get back up and keep moving forward, investing new effort and persistence in our learning, we will undoubtedly make it to Mastery. For this to happen we will need hope, an aspiration and willingness to try repeatedly and stick it out, the skills to understand the learning process and know when we need help, and strong communication with the people supporting and teaching us. Using the Quadrants in the below ways will help to build learning tenacity and a Growth Mindset:

1

Introduce the Quadrants as a framework in classes to encourage self-reflection on the learning journey and clarity on what individual students need to move forward and keep above the Line of Opportunity.

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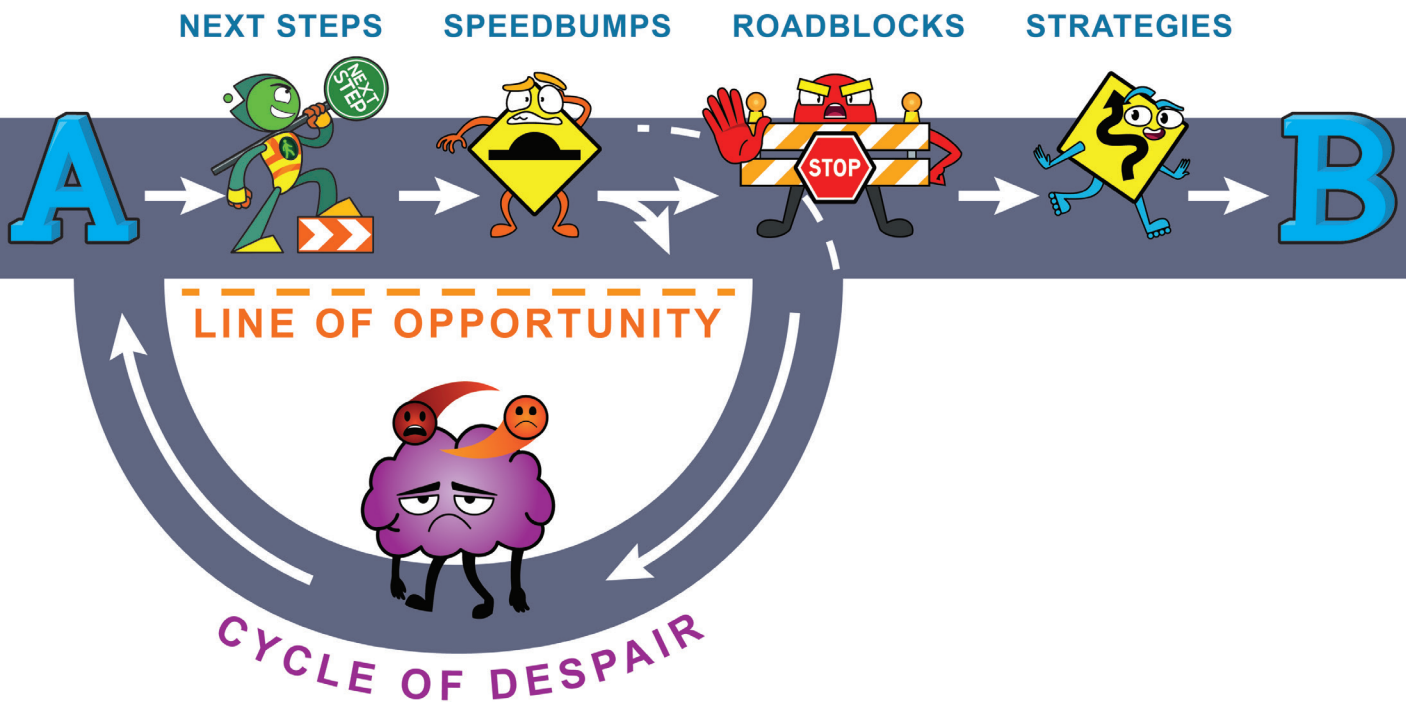
Use the Reboot Growth Mindset lesson plans (specific to your age group) to introduce the Growth and Fixed Mindset concepts. A Growth Mindset is one in which you believe with enough time and effort in the Learning Zone (managing your feelings and doubts, getting the right help and feedback and not giving up when you strike a problem or meet with failure) you will get to Mastery (or at least improve greatly in what you are doing). If you refuse to embrace a challenge or opportunity to learn you find yourself back below the Line of Opportunity and often in a Fixed Mindset, believing that it wouldn't matter how hard you tried or how many times you attempted something you couldn't improve.

3

Encourage students to consider the right effort, right strategies, reflection time and asking for feedback.

# Positive Change Highway

The **Positive Change Highway** can be used as a problem-solving tool, to support praise and feedback delivery, to develop learning tenacity and for student self-reflection.



## Troubleshooting learning challenges...

Use the Positive Change Highway language in class to draw awareness to learning challenges and the possible strategies that students might use to overcome them. The following have been shown to have a real impact on student learning resilience:

- “This is just a speedbump people. Let’s see if I can find another way to explain it.”
- “Can anyone think of a strategy we might use to get over this speedbump?”
- “In the learning zone things can get sticky and we often feel very uncomfortable. What’s the roadblock you are experiencing now?”
- “Does that strategy work in the long-term or is it a speedbump in its own right?”
- “Has your group hit a speedbump or a roadblock? What strategy could you use to keep moving?”

**A****POINT A**

Where are you now?

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**B****POINT B**Where would you like to be? (timeframe: 6 weeks?/ 10 weeks?/ 1 year?/ 5 years?)  
And what are the steps to get you there?

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**NEXT STEPS**

What are the steps to get you there?

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**SPEEDBUMPS**

What minor problems could get in the road?

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**ROADBLOCKS**

What seemingly large problems could get in the road?

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**STRATEGIES**Methods and tools to achieve your goals and overcome any problems:  
what strategies would help you get over the speedbumps and roadblocks?

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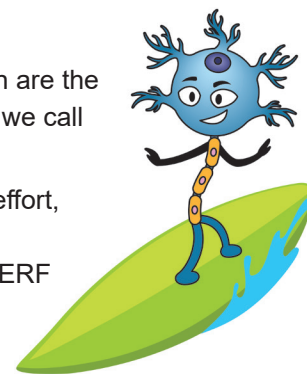


## S.E.R.F. (Strategies, Effort, Reflection, Feedback)

Encourage students to understand that the right effort, feedback, strategies and reflection are the key to all learning, and the foundation of having/developing a growth mindset. At Reboot we call this **SERFing**.

- You can encourage the class to go SERFing: we need to use the right strategies, effort, reflection and feedback.
- This easy acronym lends itself to: “Let’s go SERFing. Get SERFing, We need to SERF this, Come SERFing with me, Have you tried SERFing this?” etc.

Check out our guide to SERFing for more on this.



## Effective praise and feedback

Students need feedback to learn effectively. Ideally we deliver 3-5 pieces of specific and informative feedback to students per day. That’s right – per day. It is challenging to find the time, mental space and clarity to be able to address the entire class in this way. The **Positive Change Highway** can be used to deliver quality feedback that is both informative and supports the development of a **Growth Mindset**. It becomes easier to reward the effort, strategies and learning gained by students. See the examples below.

Importantly, the language that we use when providing feedback or praise expresses to students what we believe, our expectations of them and what we as teachers value in the classroom. Consider the following 3 versions of praise:

### NEUTRAL

“Wow, that’s a really good mark.”  
OR “Well Done.”

### PRAISING INTELLIGENCE

“Wow, that’s a really good mark.  
You must be smart at this.”

### PRAISING EFFORT

“Wow, that’s a really good mark.  
You must have spent some time  
on this”

Extensive research indicates that the small difference in language and approach leads to a considerably different outcome for students. The impact of praising intelligence and praising process are very different.

Praising process encourages a growth mindset. A growth mindset is the belief that our skills and abilities improve over time with practice and effort. The brain is like a muscle and the more we exercise it the smarter it can become. Due to our belief that we can improve, we are motivated to put hard work into a skill or acquiring information.

In contrast praising intelligence encourages a **fixed mindset**.

### Feedback/praise that helps to build a growth mindset is:

**Specific:** instead of “good job,” we can praise the amount of effort or strategy selected, rewarding effort instead of ability. “I like the way you were patient when your group hit a speedbump and couldn’t decide which topic to pick.”

**Praise effort:** “I like the way you kept trying even when those problems seemed like a roadblock”, “You used some new strategies really well to get over that speedbump”, encouraging perseverance as the problems become harder.

**Praise strategies:** “I really like the way you went back and edited your response. You’ve made it really persuasive.”

**Praise process not completion:** “You’ve used an excellent process to develop those ideas. Every time you reach a goal you start the Change process again.”

**Praise resilience:** “Your hours of practice are really paying off. What an awesome strategy! What’s the next step?”

**Praise courage:** “I’m really inspired by how you are pushing through even when you aren’t sure how it is going to turn out.”

**Praise ‘mistakes’:** “I love that mistake! Every trial is a step closer to finding a new path/solution.”

**Praise focus and impulse control:** “Fantastic focus. It looks like your concentration is getting stronger and stronger.”

**Praise discomfort:** “When it feels this hard I know I’m stretching my brain and it’s growing/getting stronger etc.” or “If it doesn’t feel uncomfortable we aren’t learning anything new.”



## A framework for self-assessment

Learning tenacity requires students are self-aware of how they are traveling and what they might need to be successful in the learning process. The **Reboot Quadrants** and the **Positive Change Highway** provide simple tools for both students and staff to evaluate their success and challenges in all aspects of learning. The simple questions below help a student to quickly build self-awareness and better manage their learning experience:

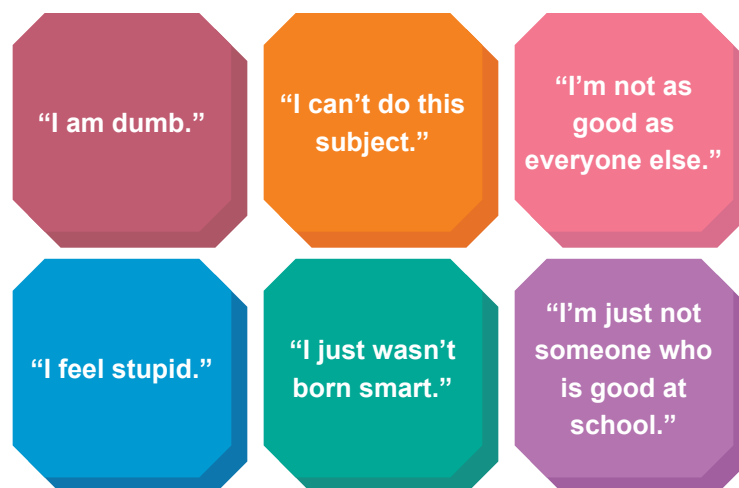
- Where am I now? or How did I get here?
- What speedbumps and roadblocks am I facing?
- What strategies could/did I use to move ahead?

From this position of knowing, everyone gains clarity on what might be needed to keep moving forward. It also builds confidence to move ahead and embrace the uncertain.

During a learning task or on completion of assessment pieces students are also able to use this language to easily reflect on their progress and how they might improve. Dialogue between student and staff is easier with this simple shared understanding of the learning process.

## Self-talk and the power of YET

Self-talk is critical to creating a growth mindset. It isn't uncommon for students to say or think the things below:



Brainstorm with your students the kinds of things that they say and think, both to themselves and others and change it to Growth Mindset language. An easy way to change perspective and attitudes is to add 'yet' to learning statements such as "I don't have it, yet", "I'm not getting it, yet" etc.

## **Establishing effective learning NOT performance goals**

Unfortunately, the nature of our education system has led many students to focus almost exclusively on the outcome of assessment tasks and not on the mastery of learning and exploration itself. As student's self-perception and understanding of what learning is changes we can support them to focus on learning (mastery and exploration of things) and not performance goals (outcome measure). This usually requires teacher scaffolding and support. It is also an opportunity to offer a variety of learning strategies to achieve the one outcome.

Through this explicit offering of sub-goals, tasks and skills within a larger assessment task learning comes to be viewed as a path to mastery not a process with an end goal of assessment.

## **Adult modelling and teacher expectations**

Having high expectations of both yourself and your students, and modelling a growth mindset in your life and work creates growth mindset norms in the classroom. Your behaviours rather than your belief in growth mindsets will make the greatest impression. The following work well to establish a growth mindset culture:

- Have high standards and expectations
- Offer a variety of practical strategies
- Respond to their and your own failures positively and demonstrate in your actions and words the multiple pathways and attempts required to master anything.

Your response, in particular to student results, can be very powerful. Recent research reported the following changes in student motivation and aspiration following 2 different types of teacher response to a score of 65% on an exam:

- a) FM 'comfort focus' ("it's okay, not everyone is good at maths, don't feel bad about it, I'll give you easier questions to answer to make you feel less stressed").
- b) GM 'strategy focus' which included tips on how to get better and setting them challenging questions.

Impact on students:

- a) FM 'comfort focus': less motivated students – expect the same again
- b) GM 'strategy focus': more motivated and expected a higher score